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NEWS RELEASE

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CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD ISSUES \$250,000 ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY TO ROBERT L. FRENCH FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDER

SACRAMENTO - The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has issued an Administrative Civil Liability Order for \$250,000 to Robert L. French for failing to comply with a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO).

On November 20, 2006, the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board issued a CAO to Robert L. French and Stockton Marketing Inc., which required the investigation and cleanup of a release of petroleum hydrocarbon constituents at the Circle A Gas Station at 1215 East 22nd Street in Marysville. The release, which was first reported in July 1997, originated from one or more underground storage tanks (USTs).

The Board's Assistant Executive Officer originally issued a Complaint to Mr. French in the amount of \$50,000 for failing to comply with the CAO. The Board voted unanimously to increase the liability to \$250,000 after considering evidence at a Sept. 11 hearing, which showed that the site remains a threat to a municipal drinking water well. The board also noted that the responsible parties have failed to clean up the site for more than a decade.

"This Board has a duty to protect the public health, especially when we are dealing with nearby rivers and wells," said Board vice chair, Katherine Hart of Granite Bay. "While \$250,000 is an extreme amount, I think we need to send a very clear message that this Board will enforce against people who are recalcitrant."

The CAO required Mr. French to define the extent and severity, and to clean up an unauthorized release of petroleum hydrocarbons from the USTs, which is polluting groundwater. Stockton Marketing Inc., a defunct company, was operating the business at the time of the release. Mr. French owns the property.

The State Water Board has authorized funds from the State Emergency, Abandoned, and Recalcitrant (EAR) Account to the Regional Water Board for direct site cleanup. Funds from the EAR account are made available to Regional Water Boards and local agencies for site cleanup when a tank owner or operator fails or refuses to take required corrective action.